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Fourth-quarter deficit put at $346 million

Ford makes it official: '81 loss was $1 billion

By Edward Lapham
Financial Editor

To no one's surprise, Ford Motor Co. reported a fourth-quarter loss of $346 million ($2.88 a share) on sales of $9.0 billion. This compared with the year-earlier loss of $316 million ($2.63 a share) on sales of $10.2 billion.

The fourth-quarter results brought the full-year deficit to a net loss of $1.06 billion ($8.81 a share) on sales of $38.2 billion compared with 1980's net loss of $1.54 billion ($12.83 a share) on sales of $37.1 billion.

The full-year loss, which was widely forecast and trumpeted during the contract concession talks with the UAW, still represents an improvement over 1980 due to "substantial reductions in fixed costs, improvements in operating efficiencies and an increase in Ford's share of the worldwide car market," a statement by Chairman Philip Caldwell and President Donald E. Petersen said.

The two executives said the results were nevertheless "unsatisfactory" and reflected low unit volume.

They said many of the improvements the company made during the year were obscured by currency translation losses of $576 million. The 1980 currency translation losses were $22 million.

In the U. S. in 1981, Ford reduced its after-tax loss to $1.195 billion from $2.018 billion in 1980.

Ford's Canadian operations incurred a 1981 after-tax loss of $252 million compared with a loss of $101 million the year before.

After-tax earnings from operations outside the U. S. and Canada declined to $387 million last year from $576 million in 1980.

Despite the improvements made by the company last year, the $1.06 billion net loss caused some erosion in the company's overall financial position.

Ford's current assets to current liabilities ratio, which measures liquidity, slipped somewhat, to 1.02 to one from 1.04 to one at the end of 1980.

Working capital decreased to $236.6 million at Dec. 31 compared with $487 million one year earlier and $2.3 billion at Dec. 31, 1979.

There were several significant swings in the components of working capital during the year. In 1981, cash items and marketable securities declined $487.2 million compared with a net increase of $394.6 million in 1980.

Receivables declined $402.3 million last year compared with a 1980 increase of $274.4 million.

Accounts payable increased by $878.1 million compared with a decrease of $783.2 million in the earlier 12-month period.

Ford listed depreciation for the year at $1.17 billion compared with $1.06 billion in 1980. Amortization of special tools was listed at $1.01 billion compared with $912 million.

Ford's total worldwide factory sales declined 0.6 percent in 1981 to 4,400,482 from 4,426,151 in 1980.

Total car and truck factory sales in the U. S. and Canada were off 2.8 percent to 2,356,473 from 2,422,208.

Total car and truck factory sales outside the U. S. and Canada rose 2.8 percent to 1,958,715 from 1,906,242.

Total worldwide car and truck wholesale sales fell 0.4 percent to 4,313,188 from 4,328,450.

Worldwide factory sales of tractors declined 10.7 percent to 87,294 from 97,701.

Used car sales
Auction Averages

February	$4,687
Month ago	$5,021
Year ago	$4,076

Model breakdown
Auction Averages

	February To Date	January	December
1982	$7,719	$7,432	$
1981	6,422	6,435	6,424
1980	5,282	5,144	5,363
1979	4,487	5,184	4,321
1978	3,658	3,633	3,475
1977	2,783	2,857	2,590
1976	2,189	2,343	2,026
1975	1,798	1,854	1,361
Overall Average	$4,687	$4,904	$4,117

North American car sales plunge 44 pct. in Canada

January sales of North-American passenger cars and trucks in Canada plunged 43.17 percent. Cars were off 44.20 percent and trucks dropped 40.51 percent.

Combined car and truck sales totaled 36,151 this January compared with 63,609 a year ago. New-car sales of 25,576 were down 44.20 percent from 45,832, while truck sales of 10,575 were down 40.51 percent from 17,777.

General Motors suffered the greatest loss, down 51.88 percent in new-car sales, to 13,077 from 27,173 last year. Ford car sales dropped 39.49 percent, to 5,406 from 8,934. Chrysler was down 30.79 percent, to 5,505 from 7,954.

American Motors, which now reports only a car total without a Renault breakout, sold 1,163 units, down 29.09 percent from 1,640 AMC/Renault products a year earlier. Volvo sales totaled 425, down 37.32 percent from 678.

GM earned 51.13 percent of the new-car market, down more than eight percentage points from 59.29 percent 12 months ago. Ford cornered 21.14 percent, up from 19.49 percent. Chrysler was ahead of Ford with 21.52 percent, up from 17.35 percent. American Motors' 4.55 percent was up from 2.39 percent, and Volvo earned 1.66 percent, up from 1.48 percent.

Truck sales, including captive imports, totaled 10,575 in January, down 40.51 percent from 17,777 last year.

GM sales of 4,870 trucks were down 46.94 percent from 9,179. Ford was down 30.20 percent, to 3,736 from 5,809. Chrysler sold 1,673 new trucks, down 30.20 percent from 2,397, and AMC retailed 296 new Jeeps, down 24.49 percent from 392.

GM earned 46.05 percent of the truck market, down from 51.63 percent. Ford climbed to 35.33 percent from 32.68 percent. Chrysler earned 15.82 percent, up from 13.48 percent, and AMC had 2.80 percent, up from 2.21 percent.

Taylor appointed

NEW YORK. — Joseph D. Taylor Jr., has been appointed control branch manager of the General Motors Acceptance Corp. office in Alexandria, Va. He succeeds Bruce A. Dobbertin, who is retiring.

25-year dealer

Jasper A. Kalo, right, president, Kalo Motors, Inc., Grafton, W. Va., receives a plaque marking his silver anniversary as an Oldsmobile dealer from Jerry L. Parkinson, Pittsburgh zone manager.

used-car auction directory

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Year-to-date total is 36 pct. below 1981

Week's output declines to 91,326

By Patricia Hoffman
Staff Writer

Downtime at three more General Motor points, Ford Motor's Lorain facility and Volkswagen of America's Westmoreland plant pulled last week's domestic auto production below the previous week's output, and the total drop was down substantially from that of the comparable 1981 week.

Last week, the auto makers targeted output at 91,326 units, down 12.50 percent from 104,376 the previous week, and down 31.31 percent from 132,947 the same week last year.

Year-to-date, the makers have built 602,673 cars, down 36.12 percent from 943,435 in the comparable 1981 period.

VWoA began a two-week shutdown at Westmoreland last week (Feb. 22). The plant is slated to return March 8 for two weeks but will be idle again the week of March 22.

GM's Arlington, Baltimore and Detroit facilities closed last week to control inventories. The Detroit point is scheduled to return today (March 1).

Also at GM, the Janesville and Oklahoma City plants remained idle last week for changeover. Both points have been down since Jan. 18.

The GM Framingham, Lordstown, South Gate, Tarrytown and Wilmington points continued down last week for inventory control.

Wilmington is scheduled to resume operations today for the first time this year, and South Gate, which was down for the entire month of February, is also slated to return today.

GM's Norwood facility will begin second-shift operations today, increasing production of the Chevrolet Camaro and Pontiac Firebird. About 1,700 workers will be called back from indefinite layoff.

Ford's Lorain point was idle last week for inventory control.

Production breakdown for the week by company is: GM, 53.10 percent; Ford, 28.88 percent; Chrysler Corp. 16.21 percent; American Motors, 1.70 percent; and Checker Motors, 0.11 percent.

AMC loss is $136 million, deficit smaller than in 1980

By Edward Lapham
Financial Editor

American Motors reported a fourth-quarter net loss of $47.2 million (85 cents a share) on sales of $621.1 million. The previous year, AMC suffered a net loss of $29 million (81 cents a share) on sales of $657.9 million.

The dismal October-December results brought the auto maker's full-year net loss to $136.6 million ($2.44 a share) on sales of $2.59 billion, compared with the 1980 net loss of $200.78 million ($6.10 a share) on sales of $2.55 billion.

W. Paul Tippett Jr., AMC's chairman and chief executive officer, said the auto maker reduced its year-to-year losses by 32 percent against a backdrop that was "one of the worst in industry history." He said "rigorous cost-cutting measures begun in 1980" were responsible for the loss reduction.

Tippett said the company's International Operations posted record sales and earnings last year "while increasing the company's share in world markets."

He said the company's AM General Corp. subsidiary also had a good year and received a record total of $830 million in new orders for military trucks and postal vehicles in 1981, making a year-end order backlog of "more than $1 billion."

Total automobile and Jeep factory sales in the U. S. and Canada declined 18.8 percent in the fourth quarter to 54,375 from 66,998 last year. For the entire year, the total was off 10.2 percent to 243,050 from 270,563.

Total automobile and Jeep factory sales overseas rose 13.6 percent in the October-December period to 12,490 from 10,996 in 1980. The total for the year was up 19.3 percent to 68,319 from 57,245.

Total worldwide wholesale sales of Jeeps and automobiles declined 14.3 percent in the fourth quarter to 66,865 from 77,994 in 1980. For the 12-month period, worldwide factory sales fell 5.0 percent to 311,369 from 327,808 in 1980.

Peck has headache to remember SAE

DETROIT.—Raymond Peck, NHTSA administrator may be a top-ranking government official, but position cut no ice as he tried to enter the SAE Show here.

No name tag, no admittance, said a husky, polite minion of Burns International Security Services. Once admitted, Peck took a ride on a 7-MPH impact demonstrator displayed by Ohio safety officials. The jolt on impact left the administrator with a pain that had him rubbing the back of his head.

VW shutdown reduces week's truck production

With Volkswagen of America's Westmoreland facility starting a two-week shutdown to control inventories, domestic truck production last week fell below the previous week's output. For the third consecutive week, however, the total was above the comparable 1981 period.

The truck makers targeted output last week at 40,892 units, down 2.80 percent from 42,070 the previous week, but a 15.74 percent gain from 35,332 in the same week last year.

So far this year, the makers have finished 269,884 trucks, down 2.10 percent from 275,677 in the comparable 1981 period.

As a result of sluggish sales of VW pickups, the Westmoreland point was closed last week for inventory control. Operations are slated to resume March 8 for two weeks, and another week of downtime is set for March 22.

International Harvester's Ft. Wayne facility was idle last week for the second of a two-week shutdown. The plant is scheduled to return today (March 1).

General Motors' Pontiac facility will end second-shift operations today, reducing production of Chevrolet and GMC light-duty utility trucks there. About 1,050 workers will be put on indefinite layoff.

Auto production in Canada tops 100,000, leads '81

Canadian auto production for 1982 reached 100,000 last week, topping the comparable 1981 total by 13.46 percent.

So far this year, the auto manufacturers have finished 111,219 units, up from 98,021 in the same period last year.

With all assembly points operating last week, the auto makers scheduled 18,525 units, a 29.92 percent gain from 14,259 the previous week, and up 31.19 percent from 14,121 in the comparable 1981 week.

The truck makers scheduled a slight gain last week with 10,943 units, up from 10,865 the previous week, but down 12.28 percent from 12,475 in the comparable week last year.

So far this year, the truck manufacturers have assembled 64,046 units, down 27.54 percent from 88,388 in the same 1981 period.

Ford Motor's St. Thomas car assembly point returned last week (Feb. 22) after being idle since Feb. 1 for inventory control.

All car and truck facilities operated last week.

U. S. CAR PRODUCTION

	Week Ended Feb. 27, 1982	Week Ended Feb. 28, 1981	Week Ended Feb. 20, 1982	Feb. Est.	Jan. 1 to Feb. 28, 1981	Jan. 1 to Feb. 27, 1982
AMERICAN MOTORS	1,550*	2,375*	1,550*	4,650*	15,165*	8,629*
Spirit	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Concord	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Eagle	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
CHRYSLER CORP.	14,800	17,470	14,788	39,464	105,706	76,369
Plymouth Total	5,800	8,470	6,309	17,168	52,287	32,919
Horizon	2,200	3,100	2,175	4,375	18,453	10,528
Reliant	3,600	4,550	4,134	12,793	30,594	22,391
Caravelle	.....	70	.....	.....	427	.....
Gran Fury	.....	750	.....	.....	2,813	.....
Chrysler Total	2,700	1,900	1,915	5,719	8,360	12,511
LeBaron	2,700	1,200	1,915	5,719	5,859	12,511
Chrysler	.....	700	.....	.....	2,501	.....
Dodge Total	6,300	7,100	6,564	16,577	45,053	30,939
Omni	2,100	1,800	2,086	4,186	13,620	9,372
Aries	3,100	4,300	3,390	9,881	26,147	16,893
Diplomat	.....	800	.....	.....	4,012	.....
Dodge 400	1,100	.....	1,088	2,510	.....	4,674
St. Regis	.....	200	.....	.....	1,280	.....
FORD MOTOR	26,384	29,827	27,495	68,587	195,040	109,419
Ford Division	17,684	21,228	18,210	41,677	135,121	64,557
Escort	7,310	8,157	6,945	17,493	65,788	26,982
Fairmont	3,413	4,196	3,388	6,801	24,380	9,885
Must./Must. II	4,479	4,087	4,494	8,973	16,387	13,284
Granada	2,286	396	2,046	6,877	9,245	10,112
T-Bird	.....	2,719	1,176	1,176	5,744	3,704
Ford	.....	1,673	.....	.....	13,577	.....
EXP	196	.....	161	357	.....	590
L-M Division	8,700	8,599	9,285	26,910	59,919	44,862
Mercury Total	6,310	8,599	7,203	18,432	52,094	29,899
Lynx	1,819	2,913	2,085	5,066	21,755	7,244
Capri	998	1,329	907	1,905	4,776	2,925
Zephyr	1,190	1,111	1,217	2,407	7,316	3,879
Cougar	991	105	1,180	3,610	4,064	5,653
XR-7	.....	1,853	457	457	3,498	1,194
Mercury	1,288	1,288	1,312	4,918	10,685	8,853
LN7	24	.....	45	69	.....	151
Lincoln Total	2,390	.....	2,082	8,478	7,825	14,963
Continental ('82)	478	.....	417	1,697	.....	3,522
Lincoln	956	.....	839	3,481	3,692	5,992
Mark VI	956	.....	826	3,300	4,133	5,449
GENERAL MOTORS	48,492	79,029	57,121	199,127	597,831	390,394
Buick Division	14,755	18,629	16,059	56,279	144,407	99,757
Skylark	2,495	5,449	2,553	9,370	41,712	13,825
Skyhawk J	2,400	.....	2,321	8,682	.....	11,963
Century	2,665	4,068	2,798	10,696	28,116	19,352
Regal	3,600	3,842	4,947	14,134	37,163	25,718
Buick	3,175	3,990	3,041	12,166	27,609	25,481
Riviera	420	1,280	399	1,231	9,807	3,418
Cadillac Division	2,130	6,314	5,694	15,707	50,077	35,819
Cimarron	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	493
Seville	545	635	531	1,587	5,366	2,950
Eldorado	1,585	1,220	1,550	4,645	10,722	8,897
Cadillac	.....	4,459	3,613	9,475	33,989	23,479
Chevrolet Division	7,450	28,209	11,614	36,618	208,426	88,775
Chevette	1,720	9,030	1,686	3,406	42,165	6,739
Cavalier	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	13,469
Celebrity	590	.....	551	2,518	.....	6,155
Camaro	4,120	3,158	3,836	15,419	18,954	28,296
Citation	.....	6,554	.....	.....	52,195	11,144
Malibu	.....	3,612	2,891	6,838	36,011	8,953
Monte Carlo	.....	255	1,640	4,481	19,581	6,434
Chevrolet	420	4,800	406	1,679	33,354	2,951
Corvette	600	800	604	2,277	6,166	4,634
Oldsmobile Division	18,400	18,650	18,205	68,855	144,941	119,623
Omega	1,455	3,300	1,486	5,509	23,449	10,410
Firenza	2,460	.....	2,310	8,671	.....	18,203
Cutlass	4,800	8,840	4,784	18,190	70,648	27,170
Cutlass/Ciera	3,290	.....	3,169	12,281	.....	15,566
Oldsmobile	5,405	5,530	5,429	21,136	43,360	42,563
Toronado	1,050	980	1,027	3,068	7,484	5,711
Pontiac Division	5,757	7,227	5,549	21,668	49,980	46,420
Acadiant †	.....	250	.....	.....	1,796	.....
J2000	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1,838
T1000	118	.....	152	270	.....	510
Firebird	2,359	922	2,126	8,847	8,407	15,620
Phoenix	.....	2,635	.....	578	18,812	3,509
Grand Prix	1,640	2,345	1,624	6,065	11,718	12,503
Bonneville ('82)	1,640	.....	1,647	5,908	.....	12,440
A6000	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
LeMans	.....	935	.....	.....	6,655	.....
Pontiac	.....	140	.....	.....	2,592	.....
VOLKSWAGEN	.....	4,160	3,322	10,266	29,351	17,262
CHECKER	100*	86*	100*	400*	342	600*
Total Cars, U. S.	91,326	132,947	104,376	322,494	943,435	602,673

TRUCK PRODUCTION IN U. S.†

	Week Ended Feb. 27, 1982	Week Ended Feb. 28, 1981	Week Ended Feb. 20, 1982	Feb. Est.	Jan. 1 to Feb. 28, 1981	Jan. 1 to Feb. 27, 1982
CHEVROLET	13,145	8,688	13,744	48,714	100,032	98,173
DODGE	2,900	1,600	3,011	7,139	10,101	16,886
FORD	17,157	14,532	16,567	53,885	85,161	86,535
GMC	3,890	4,757	4,283	16,540	36,767	34,141
INTERNATIONAL	600*	1,690	600*	3,361*	11,783	7,839*
VOLKSWAGEN	.....	1,040	665	2,044	7,077	3,347
JEEP	1,750*	1,740*	1,750*	5,250*	15,576*	11,463*
AM GENERAL	50*	85*	50*	150*	680*	300*
MISCELLANEOUS	1,400*	1,200*	1,400*	5,600*	8,500*	11,200*
Total Trucks, U. S.	40,892	35,332	42,070	142,683	275,677	269,884

CANADIAN TRUCK PRODUCTION

	Week Ended Feb. 27, 1982	Week Ended Feb. 28, 1981	Week Ended Feb. 20, 1982	Feb. Est.	Jan. 1 to Feb. 28, 1981	Jan. 1 to Feb. 27, 1982
CHRYSLER CORP.	2,000	1,600	2,029	7,410	7,816	13,445
FORD MOTOR	3,244	4,200	3,116	7,054	27,825	13,525
GENERAL MOTORS	5,464	6,430	5,481	18,537	50,633	35,235
INTERNATIONAL	235	245	239	874	2,114	1,841
Total Trucks, Canada	10,943	12,475	10,865	33,875	88,388	64,046
N. American Trucks	51,835	47,807	52,935	176,558	364,065	333,930

†—Now includes window van production. *—Estimated.
Jeep includes commercial only. AM General includes government-destined vehicles.

CANADIAN CAR PRODUCTION

	Week Ended Feb. 27, 1982	Week Ended Feb. 28, 1981	Week Ended Feb. 20, 1992	Feb. Est.	Jan. 1 to Feb. 28, 1981	Jan. 1 to Feb. 27, 1982
AMERICAN MOTORS	600	600	610	2,361	4,328	3,750
CHRYSLER CORP.	3,440	1,800	3,426	12,999	3,532	26,136
FORD MOTOR	8,060	2,296	3,833	15,814	10,257	27,469
GENERAL MOTORS	6,200	9,200	6,160	27,225	78,228	52,065
VOLVO	225	225	225	900	1,676	1,799
Total Cars, Canada	18,525	14,121	14,259	59,299	98,021	111,219
N. American Cars	109,851	147,068	118,635	381,793	1,041,456	713,892
N. American Trucks	51,835	47,807	52,935	176,558	364,065	333,930
North American Cars and Trucks	161,686	194,875	171,570	558,351	1,405,521	1,047,822

†—All Acadians and Caravelles are built for sale in Canada. *—Estimated.

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Output skids to 34-year low for February

By Patricia Hoffman
Staff Writer

Although domestic auto production in February was higher than in January, the month's total was the lowest for February in 34 years.

The auto makers built 325,243 units in February, a 32.53 percent drop from 482,074 in the comparable 1981 month, and the lowest total for that month since 1948 when only 274,499 cars were completed.

Of the six auto companies, only Checker Motors showed a gain last month with 300 units, up 20.48 percent, from 249 in February of last year.

Losses for the month by the other manufacturers were: General Motors, 202,058, down 32.20 percent from 298,004 in last year's period; Ford Motor, 68,779, down 29.46 percent from 97,505; Chrysler Corp., 39,685, down 61.35 percent from 64,033; Volkswagen of America, 10,266, a drop of 38.04 percent from 16,567, and American Motors, 4,155, down 27.30 percent from 5,715.

March holds little hope for recovery as the makers have scheduled only 495,633 units, down 20.78 percent from 625,620 in the comparable 1981 month.

Again, only Checker is looking at a gain with 360 units forecast for this month, up from 209 last March.

The forecast for the other

Continued on Page 38, Col. 1

New at Geneva

Ford Quicksilver bows at Geneva

The fertile drawing boards at Ford Motor Co.'s Ghia operations in Turin produced another concept car for the Geneva Auto Show. Known as the Quicksilver, it is not intended for production, the company said. It is the first-ever mid-engine four-door sedan. Drag coefficient of the Quicksilver is approximately 0.30.

First Porsche Cabriolet since '65

Porsche's 911-SC Cabriolet, making its debut at the Geneva show, is the first full cabriolet from Porsche in 17 years. The design includes a three-hoop system with a 50-percent fixed-roof segment beneath the closed cloth top, making it quite rigid. With a maximum speed of about 145 MPH, Porsche claims that the 911-SC Cabriolet is the fastest production cabriolet in the world.

Oldsmobile tops Chevy in U.S. sales per dealer

By Jenny L. King
Staff Writer

For the first time since 1970, Chevrolet dropped from the top spot as the U. S. make with most average sales per dealer in a calendar year. It yielded not to its old rival, Ford, which bumped it 11 years ago, but to Oldsmobile.

Oldsmobile dealers averaged 263 sales per outlet in 1981, compared with 259 for Chevrolet.

Average sales of domestic units per new-car dealership slipped to 275 from 276 the previous year. It would have dropped farther, but was buoyed by the addition of Volkswagen, now counted as a domestic dealership network. VW franchises numbered just over 1,000 and have a strong annual average.

The average per outlet was 333 in 1979 and 337 in 1978.

General Motors dealers sold an average of 349 units per outlet in 1981, down from 367 in 1980 and down from 426 in 1979. GM's record was 464 in 1978.

Volkswagen of American, new to the domestic lineup in 1981, averaged 241 sales per outlet, second among the five U. S. auto makers.

Ford Motor Co. averaged 236 sales per dealer in 1981, just missing its year-ago 237 mark. Two years ago, its dealers sold 322 units on an average.

Chrysler Corp. dealers sold an average of 193 new cars per outlet in 1981, up from 163 a year earlier. Two years ago, its dealer population averaged 202.

American Motors dealers slipped to an average of 85 units from 88 sales per dealer in 1980.

None of the traditional domestic makes met or surpassed sales-per-dealer records during 1981. Seven, however, were up from the 1980 averages.

Oldsmobile climbed to 263

Continued on Page 6, Col. 1

breaking news

Mitsubishi Starion bows at Geneva

GENEVA.—Mitsubishi picked the Geneva Auto Show to unveil its new coupe, the Starion. The 2+2 has a 2-liter, turbocharged gasoline engine and an antiskid braking system. The car will be sold first in Europe and go on sale later in Japan and the U. S. This is the first time Mitsubishi has introduced a new model outside Japan and it will be the first time for marketing a new car outside the home market.

UAW and AMC continue investment talks

MILWAUKEE.—UAW officials will meet today (March 8) with American Motors Corp. officials to further explore a $150 million investment plan which requires workers to invest 10 percent of their raises in wages and benefits in AMC over a 22-month period. Members of the AMC-UAW Council were to decide last week if they would begin talks on the proposal but required more information before a decision was made.

See BREAKING NEWS, Page 8, Col. 1

Tops year-earlier month 11th time in row

Service Index maintains margin

By Francis J. Gawronski
Service Editor

With four of the five indicators in the Automotive News Service Index registering gains, service and parts business in new-car dealerships across the country jumped off to a good start in January with volume amounting to 105.3 percent of the business for the same month last year.

January marked the 11th consecutive month in which shop business has shown an increase over the comparable period the previous year. In January, 1981, service and parts business was up 1.8 percent.

The leading indicator this January was sales of all parts and P&A sales, those used in the shop plus counter and wholesale sales. This indicator was up 11.8 percent above the volume done a year ago.

Shop parts sales — those used in dealers' shops on customer-paid and warranty jobs — were up 11.6 percent, while gross profit on all labor, parts and P&A sales—the most important indicator from a dealer's standpoint—was up 8.6 percent.

Total labor sales, customer-paid and warranty, were up 2.0 percent, while repair orders written were off 7.7 percent from the volume registered in the same month in 1981.

Figures used in the Service Index are compiled from monthly reports on service and parts business from a cross-section of the nation's new-car dealers.

SERVICE INDEX
105.3*

	Jan., '82 vs. Jan., '81
Gross Profit on All Labor and P&A Sales	+ 8.6%
Repair Orders Written	— 7.7%
Total Labor Sales (Customer & Warranty)	+ 2.0%
Shop Parts Sales (Customer & Warranty)	+11.6%
Sales of All P&A	+11.8%

*—Survey by Automotive News shows that dealers' service and parts business in January, 1982 was 105.3 percent of business in January, 1981.

VW and GE work out a deal

Detroit robot exhibit jampacked

By Roger Rowand
Engineering Editor

DETROIT. — On opening day of the Robot Show here, security guards were forced to allow visitors into the exhibit hall a few at a time because of jam-packed overcrowding.

The elbow-to-elbow, back-to-belly Cobo Hall crowds were just one indication that the dawn of the robot era has come.

Industry is perched on the lip of a day sure to quickly include a period of corporate consolidations, sale of entrepreneurships to big outfits, the demise of some firms and back-scratching technical agreements between business organizations on a global basis.

One of the latter such arrangements was announced on the eve of Robots VI, sponsored by Robotics International of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers and the Robot Institute of America, both based in Dearborn.

The announcement was of an agreement covering robot technology interchange between General Electric Co. and Volkswagenwerk of West Germany. In addition to trading know-how, GE will market VW robots in the U. S.

The robots are VW-designed and will be produced by VW in Germany until GE tools up. They have been available commercially in Germany in a limited way for several years.

GE now will market 11 robot models ranging in price from $50,000 to $125,000 each. Until now, it has offered no heavy-lifting, point-to-point models.

• Jules A. Mirabal, general manager of GE Automated Systems, called the agreement a major step in GE's drive to become a leading supplier of industrial robots. Some industry sources say the robot industry

Continued on Page 6, Col. 4

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